REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-3 have been amended. Claims 1-9 are pending.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings based on the reasons that the reference character "50" is not mentioned in the description. Character "50" is mentioned in the specification on page 15, line 1. For this reason, this objection should be removed.

In addition, the Examiner has suggested designating Figs. 6 and 7 by a legend such as "Prior Art". Replacement Figs. 6 and 7 are attached in order to insert "Prior Art" as per enclosed copies. As a result, all drawings now meet the Examiner's requirements.

Claims 1-3 have been amended in order to define the present invention as patentably distinguished from the cited reference to Saito (US Patent 4,717,111) and Yokota (US Patent 4,861,004). In addition, typographical errors in claims 2 and 3 suggested by the Examiner are also corrected.

Claim 1 is amended to clarify the following unique features of the rubber elastic body:

(i) The pair of rubber legs extend approximately straightly with a substantially constant axial wall thickness, from an axially medial portion of the inner sleeve to which basal ends of the rubber legs are bonded, to opposite axial end portions of the outer sleeve to which distal ends of the rubber legs are bonded so that the pair of rubber legs gradually extend axially outwardly as they move away from the inner sleeve towards the outer sleeve, whereby the rubber elastic body has a generally "V" shape overall; and

(ii) The pair of rubber legs gradually extends axially outwardly as they move away from the inner sleeve toward the outer sleeve.

The above-mentioned amendment to claim 1 is made to distinguish the present invention from Saito where the rubber legs abruptly extends axially outwardly, and Yokota where the rubber legs windingly extending axially outwardly.

Likewise, claim 3 is amended to clarify the unique features of the rubber elastic body as follows:

(i) In the first vertical cross section, the rubber elastic body has a generally "V" shape overall so that a minimum axial distance portion thereof having an axial distance La is adjacent to the inner sleeve and provides an inner bonding surface thereof bonded to an axial media portion, and a maximum axial distance portion thereof having an axial distance La is adjacent to the inner sleeve and provides an inner bonding surface thereof bonded to an axial medial portion, and a maximum axial distance portion thereof having an axial distance Lb larger than the axial distance La (La < Lb) is adjacent to the outer sleeve and provides an outer bonding surface thereof bonded to the outer sleeve; and

(ii) In the second vertical cross section, the rubber elastic body has a generally tapered shape overall so that a maximum axial distance portion thereof having an axial distance Lc larger than the axial distance La (La < Lc) is adjacent to the inner sleeve and provides an inner bonding surface thereof bonded to the inner sleeve, and a minimum axial distance portion thereof having an axial distance Ld that is smaller than Lc (Lc > Ld) is adjacent to the outer sleeve and provides an outer bonding surface thereof bonded to the outer sleeve.

The above-mentioned amendment to claim 3 is made to clarify the claimed portions measuring La, Lb, Lc, Ld, and to thereby distinguish the claimed portions from the referenced portions in Saito and Yokota, mentioned by the Examiner.

It should be appreciated that the unique configurations of the rubber elastic body as defined in claim 1 or 3 is specifically arranged in order to exhibit required spring characteristics in a suspension rubber bushing of vertical mount type, and are never taught or anticipated by Saito and Yokota, which relate to rubber bushings of horizontal mount type where the required spring characteristics are completely different from the ones of vertical mount type, which will be described in detail in the following paragraphs. A basis for the above-described amendments to claims 1 and 3 will be found on paragraphs [0032] to [0034], Figs. 3-5, for example.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. 102 (b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5 and 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,717,111 to Saito.

The present invention has been developed to meet a recent demand for vertically mount rubber bushings in suspension system (see paragraphs [0004]-[0005] of the specification), and provides a suspension rubber bushing having a unique configuration suitably arranged to be used as a vertical mount type. Namely, the invention has been developed to solve the problem raised when a conventional rubber bushing (e.g., shown in Fig. 7), which is usually mounted in the horizontal direction, is used in the vertically mounted state. More specifically, the vertically mounted conventional rubber bushing is more likely to suffer from a high level of prizing force during use, as discussed in paragraph [0008] of the specification, so that repeated input of prizing force will cause earlier fatigue of the rubber bushing, as discussed in paragraph [0009] of the specification.

In order to solve the problem in vertically mounted rubber bushings, the invention employs the unique configurations of the rubber elastic body as defined in claims 1 or 3 and mentioned above at the beginning of the Remarks/Arguments. In the prizing force input direction as shown in Fig. 5A, the present rubber bushing is able to minimize deformation and strain of the rubber elastic body against input of prizing force due to the unique "V" shape configuration as defined in claim 1 or 3, thereby solving the damage caused by input prizing force, and extending an endurance life thereof (see [0042] of the specification, for example). In the other direction orthogonal to the prizing force input direction as shown in Fig. 5B, the present rubber bushing is able to exhibit a required high spring stiffness due to the unique "tapered shape" as defined in claim 1 or 3, thereby maintaining durability thereof in this direction (see [0043] of the specification). That is, the rubber elastic body of the present invention is suitably tuned to meet the required spring characteristics of the rubber bushing of vertical mount type.

The cited references disclose the conventional rubber bushings whose rubber elastic bodies do not meet the requirements as defined in claims 1 and 3.

First, Saito fails to teach a rubber bushing of vertical mount type. As is apparent from Fig. 8, Saito merely discloses the horizontally mounted rubber bushing, and is silent about the problem when it is mounted vertically.

In addition, while the Examiner uses the same cross section, i.e., Fig. 2 of Saito to explain the feature of the rubber elastic body of the rubber bushing of Saito (see attachment 1 of the Action), if Fig. 2 (II-II cross section) is considered as one vertical cross section, the other cross section orthogonal to the one vertical cross section is not Fig. 2 but Fig. 8. Therefore, the Examiner fails to support his arguments.

Moreover, if Fig. 2 or Fig. 8 shows the one vertical cross section, Saito fails to teach a generally "V" shape rubber elastic body having a pair of rubber legs extending approximately straight with a substantially constant axial wall thickness from axially medial portion of the inner sleeve to which basal ends of the rubber legs are bonded, to opposite axial end portions of the outer sleeve to which distal ends of the rubber legs are bonded. In addition, the rubber legs shown in Fig. 2 never extends gradually axially outwardly as they move away from the inner sleeve toward the outer sleeve. Thus, Saito fails to meet the requirement as defined in claim 1. Also, the rubber elastic body shown in Fig. 2 or Fig. 8 of Saito does not have a generally "V" shape overall, so that its minimum axial distance portion is never adjacent to and bonded to the inner sleeve, and its maximum axial distance portion is never adjacent to and bonded to the outer sleeve. Thus, Saito fails to meet the requirement as defined in claim 3.

If Fig. 2 or Fig. 8 shows the other vertical cross section, Saito fails to teach a generally tapered shape main body rubber portion having an axial wall thickness thicker than does the rubber legs and elastically linking the inner sleeve and outer sleeve while extending in the second direction. The rubber body shown in Fig. 2 or Fig. 8 never increase in length in the axial direction as it moves away from the outer sleeve toward the inner sleeve. Thus, Saito fails to meet the requirement as defined in claim 1. In addition, the main body rubber portion shown in Fig. 2 or Fig. 8 does not have a generally tapered shape, so that its maximum axial distance portion is never adjacent to and bonded to the inner sleeve, and its minimum axial distance portion is never adjacent to and bonded to the outer sleeve. Thus, Saito fails to meet the requirement as defined in claim 3.

For the above reasons, Saito does not teach the rubber bushing of vertical mount type having unique rubber elastic body configuration as defined in claim 1. In addition, since Saito fails to teach generally "V" shape rubber elastic body in one of cross section in Figs. 2 and 8, and tapered shape rubber body in the other cross section, Saito never meets the dimensional requirements defined in claim 3.

Saito never teaches the rubber bushing of vertical mount type having unique rubber elastic body configuration as defined in claims 1 and 3. Thus, if the bushing of Saito uses in a vertically mounted state, it will be suffer from the conventional problem, and never exhibits the advantages achieved by the present bushing.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 8, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,861,004 to Yokota.

Yokota fails to teach a rubber bushing of vertical mount type. As is apparent from Fig. 1 or other Figures, Yokota merely discloses the horizontally mounted rubber bushing, and is silent about the problem when it is mounted vertically.

In addition, while the Examiner uses the same cross section, i.e., Fig. 4B of Yokota to explain the feature of the rubber elastic body of the rubber bushing of Yokota (see attachment 2 of the Action), if Fig. 4B (III-III cross section) is considered as one vertical cross section, the other cross section orthogonal to the one vertical cross section appears differently as is expected from Fig. 1. Therefore, the Examiner fails to support his arguments.

Moreover, if Fig. 4B shows the one vertical cross section, Yokota fails to teach a generally "V" shape rubber elastic body having a pair of rubber legs extending approximately straight with a substantially constant axial wall thickness from axially medial portion of the inner sleeve to which basal ends of the rubber legs are bonded, to opposite axial end portions of the outer sleeve to which distal ends of the rubber legs are bonded. Yokota shows U shape rubber elastic body whose rubber legs extending windingly. In addition, the rubber legs shown in Fig. 4B never extend gradually axially outwardly as they move away from the inner sleeve toward the outer sleeve. Thus, Yokota fails to meet the requirement as defined in claim 1. Also, the rubber elastic body shown in Fig. 4B of Yokota does not have a generally "V" shape overall, so that its minimum axial distance portion is never adjacent to and bonded to the inner sleeve, and its maximum axial distance portion is never adjacent to and bonded to the outer sleeve. Thus, Yokota fails to meet the requirement as defined in claim 3.

If Fig. 4B shows the other vertical cross section, Yokota fails to teach a generally tapered shape main body rubber portion having an axial wall thickness thicker than does the rubber legs and elastically linking the inner sleeve and outer sleeve while extending in the second direction. The rubber body shown in Fig. 4B never increase in length in the axial direction as it moves away from the outer sleeve toward the inner sleeve. Thus, Yokota fails to meet the requirement as defined in claim 1. Also, the main body rubber portion shown in Fig. 4B does not have a generally tapered shape, so that its maximum axial distance portion is never adjacent to and bonded to the inner sleeve, and its minimum axial distance portion is never adjacent to and bonded to the outer sleeve. Thus, Yokota fails to meet the requirement as defined in claim 3.

For the above reasons, Yokota does not teach the rubber bushing of vertical mount type having unique rubber elastic body configuration as defined in claim 1. In addition, since Yokota fails to teach generally "V" shape rubber elastic body in one of cross section in Fig. 4B, and tapered shape rubber body in the other cross section, Yokota never meets the dimensional requirements defined in claim 3.

Yokota does not teach the rubber bushing of vertical mount type having unique rubber elastic body configuration as defined in claims 1 and 3. Thus, if the bushing of Yokota uses in a vertically mounted state, it will be suffer from the conventional problem, and never exhibits the advantages achieved by the present bushing.

For at least these reasons, claims 1 and 3, as amended, are not anticipated or made obvious by the cited references.

Claims 2 and 4-9 are ultimately dependent on the independent claims. In addition, these claims add additional features, which when taken together with the limitations of the independent claims are not anticipated or made obvious by the cited reference. For at least these reasons, claims 2 and 4-9 are not anticipated or made obvious by the cited reference.

Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at (650) 961-8300.

Respectfully submitted,
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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figures 6 and 7. These sheets, which include Figures 6 and 7, replace the original sheets including Figures 6 and 7. In Figures 6 and 7, the legend "Prior Art" is inserted.

Attachments: Replacement Sheets (2)
Annotated Sheets Showing Changes (2)

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Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

FIG.6

(Prior Art)

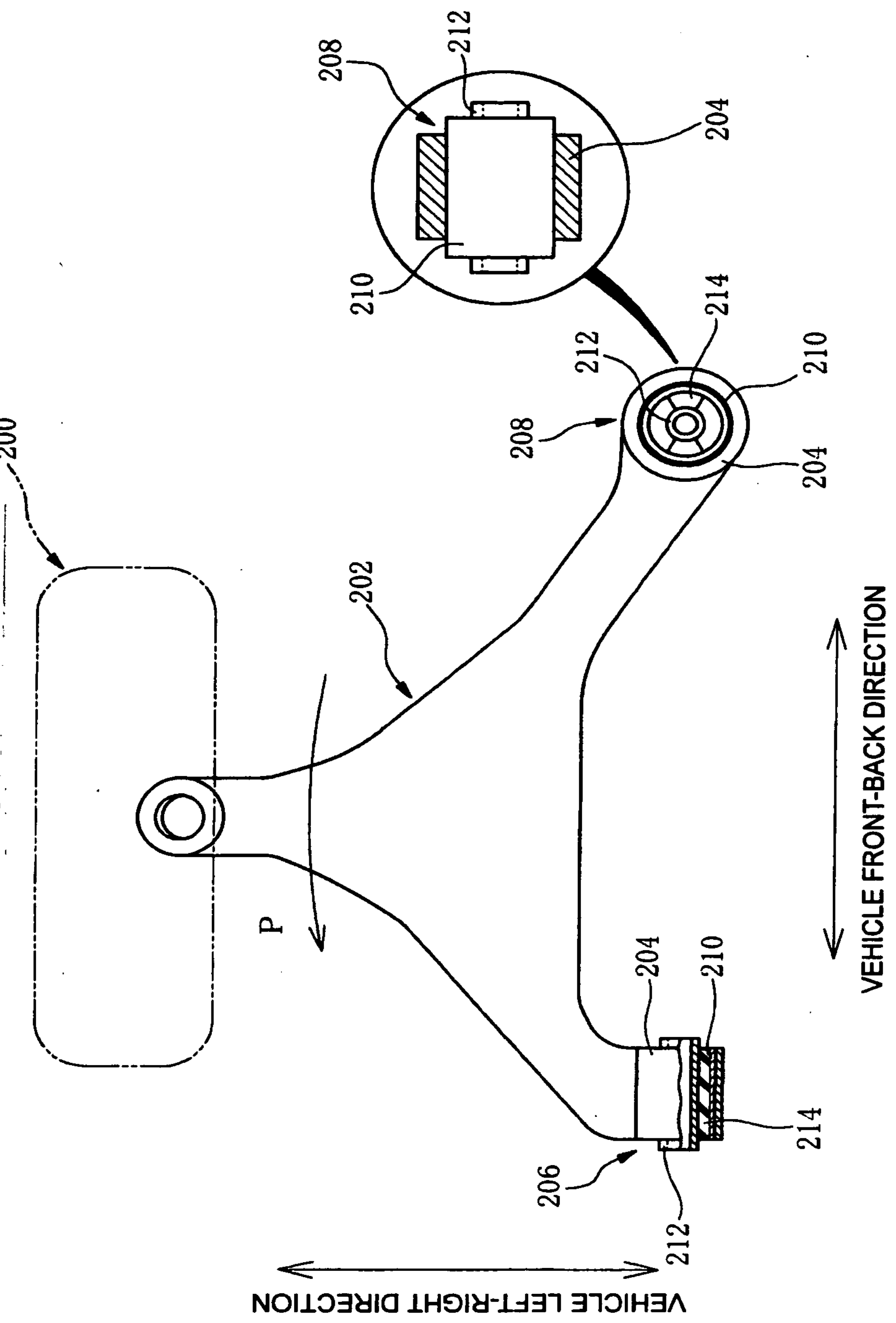

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FIG.7

(Prior Art)